



News Release

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Media Contacts:
Kristina Nguyen
Lake Ridge PTA President
801-250-1781
Lynda Blades
Utah Department of Health
801-538-6229

Magna Residents on Path to Fitness with New Track *UDOH Health Data Help Spur Interest, Funds*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Magna officials will unveil a new walking track today on the campus of Lake Ridge Elementary, thanks to the vision and hard work of the school PTA and a little extra push provided by data from the Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

The PTA began looking for funds last spring for a track to help students get and stay fit. They were short of their goal when Magna Town Council member Starr Campbell asked the Council to pitch in. To support the request, Campbell showed members UDOH data that show Magna has the third highest rate of overweight/obesity and physical inactivity in the state, and is fifth highest in the “fair to poor” health category.

“By presenting real data that is specific to our community, I was able to show a need to create more opportunities to be physically active,” said Campbell. The data come from a recent ‘Small Area’ report that analyzes health information by 61 small geographic areas based on ZIP codes. The Council allocated \$2,500 toward the track, construction of which was finished earlier this month.

Lake Ridge principal, Ted Williams, believes in encouraging physical activity among students. Lake Ridge is a Gold Medal School, which means it is committed to providing an environment where students can be active and eat healthy. The school’s theme is “We’re on track for success.”

“It makes sense for us to build the track here where students can benefit from it every day,” Assistant Principal Mary Beth Schmidt said.

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“We also want to reach out to the larger community and make sure that families are aware that it is for them to use, too,” added Schmidt. “We want this to be a lasting legacy for Magna.”

Lowes’ home improvement store, local businesses and private citizens donated the bulk of the \$20,000 needed to build the concrete path.

Lynda Blades, UDOH Physical Activity Coordinator, says Magna’s story is a great example of how local public health data can foster positive change in a community. “Community leaders may know instinctively or by their own experience what the health needs of their residents, but this local data speaks loudly to decision makers and the public.”

Data for Utah’s Small Area Reports are gathered through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, a statewide random telephone survey of adults. Visit <http://health.utah.gov/opha/publications/brfss/SA2001-2005/sa2001-2005.html> to download the full report, or contact Lynda Blades at lblades@utah.gov or 801-538-6229 for more information.

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